

Laughter and Merriment at Annual Holi Event

As each year, this year too saw a huge turnout of CMLA members, family and friends with over 1,300 people joining in the annual Holi picnic at the Mile Square Regional Park in Fountain Valley.

The morning began with lines standing at the registration desk so those attending could get their wristbands and lunch coupons. As soon as they got this, kids rushed off into the green lawns to meet friends and take part in the games that had been organized. Volunteers conducted the ever popular tug-of-war and taught everyone the rules of kho- kho. There was also the three-legged- race which brought laughter all around, sack race, lemon and spoon race and musical chairs. Children cheered on adults and in turn parents shouted out the names of their children as all participated in the games.

Tikki chole, sandwiches and yummy jalebis were on the menu for the lunch. People socialized and caught up with each other over the meal, making it a congenial and delightful time for all.

Then came the central moment: colors, already bagged in neat packages for distribution were given out to all. The park was filled with shouts of ‘Holi Hail!’ and the air with myriad colors. Soon no face was recognizable under the colors that were smeared on each person – a true submergence of all visible dif-



ferences! Swami Ishwarananda was drenched in color — and spent a lot of time accepting colorful Holi wishes from all CMLA members, especially children!

Another aspect of the event being a success was put to test at the end of the event, as volunteers, tired yet energized by the enthusiasm around and the idea of seva, set about to clean and put things back in order. In short effect, the park grounds were restored to the original, pristine state and everybody returned home happy, laughter echoing in their ears and hearts.



Happy Birthday Swamiji!



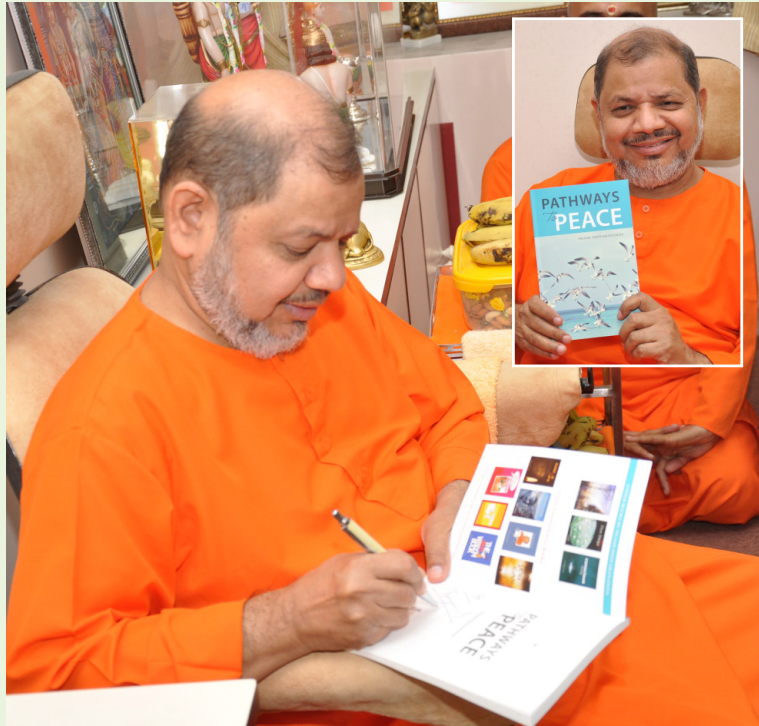
The CMLA-VYASALA yoga class was treated to a special talk on March 29 by Swami Ishwarananda. Swamiji spoke to them drawing the contrasts in the path of jnana and Patanjali’s yoga and concluded by talking about the confluence in the final stages of Dhyana and Samadhi.

After this, the group that had gathered along with some long time CMLA members joined in singing “Janma Dinam” to Swamiji whose birthday it was the day before. Attendees remembered fondly their time working with him, his talks and spoke of his ‘coolness’ in sunglasses and attire!

After this, everyone dispersed to the dining hall where Swamiji cut an eggless cake and everyone enjoyed a delicious meal cooked by volunteers.

For the Archives

Guruji Swami Tejomayananda on Shivaratri, releasing Swami Ishwarananda’s newly penned book, ‘Pathways to Peace,’ at Sandeepany.



CORD Walkathon Draws Enthusiastic Participation

The annual CORD Walkathon, conducted by CMLA volunteers, began on the morning of March 23 in Fountain Valley with Swami Ishwarananda and Acharya Mahadevji chanting a prayer. Clad in bright yellow CORD T-shirts, the two acharyas led off the walk surrounded by enthusiastic participants, who by the end of the event numbered about 200. Swamiji, who set a brisk pace, egged on all to join him, the youth in particular!

Around the track, three stations were set up in keeping with the theme of health and fitness. Vidya Kudva, a nutritionist, shared her knowledge about the Indian diet, Vidya Venkatesh demonstrated the Surya Namaskar and other yoga poses and Shila Patel talked about ayurveda using a questionnaire to do mini-consultation on body types, etc. She even brought a massage therapist to give shoulder and neck massages to the walkers. Everyone loved it!



Participants were given bright green “I love CORD” bags stuffed with a water bottle and granola bar. Each was also eligible for a raffle with generous prizes donated by Shila Patel, Mona Trivedi, and Vijay Raman and included a Kindle, a computer hard drive, tickets to Disneyland and the movies, as well as gift card to different stores.

As the participant had to be present to win the prize, the crowd gathered around at the time of the raffle draw and cheered along as Swamiji and Mahadevaji each selected the raffle tickets.

The goal of the walkathon was to increase awareness of the activities of CORDas well as raise funds for rural India and the local

community. To that end, it was met with the participation, the collection of about \$10,000 and keen involvement of young volunteers from the 9th-12th grades.



Valley BV Kids Enjoy Art Project

Children in the two Valley Bal Vihars listened to stories, chanted slokas and created art projects in celebration of Ram Navami and Hanuman Jayanti. They colored, wrote and sequined on their images of Hanumanji and the padukas of the Lord.



Spring Welcomed!

Spring, the season of harvest and joy is welcomed throughout India with great celebrations of color, dance and thanksgiving. The BVs of the Valley area, too marked the beginning of the season with prayer and a grand pot-luck lunch which was enjoyed by adults and children alike.



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